

SPOOL FOR WINDING OPTICAL FIBER

CLAIM OF PRIORITY

This application claims priority to an application entitled "SPOOL FOR WINDING OPTICAL FIBER," filed in the Korean Intellectual Property Office on
5 December 6, 2002 and assigned Serial No. 2002-77170, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a spool for winding an optical fiber, and more
10 particularly to a spool for winding an optical fiber comprising flanges attached to each other using an ultrasonic fusion splicer.

2. Description of the Related Art

Recently, in order to construct an information super-highway, there is a great demand for optical fibers which are used as optical signal transmission media in optical
15 communication systems. They are typically wound on a spool and may be provided with coating layers on their outer circumferences or may be uncoated. The spool for winding an optical fiber comprises a set of spool bodies, each body formed as a barrel having a cylindrical shape and contacting the other body, a pad attached to outer circumferences of the barrels, and a cylindrical hub formed through the spool bodies in

an axial direction.

One example of the aforementioned spool for winding optical fiber is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,036,138 entitled "Spool for Holding Winding of Optical Fiber" and patented on March 14, 2000. A construction of the disclosed spool is shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The spool 1 comprises two flanges 1a and 1b, each having an outer tube 5 with a respective welding surface 4. The first and second flanges 1a, 1b are jointed together so that their welding surfaces 4 are mutually engaged, and then welded. A pad 3 is wound around the outer tubes 5, and optical fiber 6 is wound around the pad. However, the heating process for welding the flanges 1a, 1b complicates assembly of the spool 1. Further, it is impossible to disassemble the spool for re-welding if the flanges 1a, 1b were misaligned, which leads to a high defect rate for the product.

Another example of a spool for winding an optical fiber is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,908,172, entitled "Spool for Fiber Optic Media" and patented on June 1, 1999. As illustrated in Fig. 3, the spool 10 comprises two flanges 11, 12 provided with winding drums 11a, 12a. The spool 10 further includes interlocking means 13 for selectively interlocking face-to-face or disengaging the winding drums 11a, 12a of the flanges 11, 12.

However, a mold is needed to manufacture the interlocking means 13, which increases the number of components. This increases assembly time and the difficulty in treating components, and, concomitantly, production cost.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention has been made in view of the above problems. According to the present invention, a spool for winding an optical fiber comprises flanges attached to each other using an ultrasonic fusion splicer, thereby reducing
5 assembly time and improving productivity.

In another aspect of the present invention, the flanges are assembled into the spool using an ultrasonic fusion splicer, thereby reducing the number of required components and reducing the production cost.

In accordance with the present invention, the spool comprises: first and second
10 cylindrical barrels for winding the optical fiber thereon, the barrels being axially engaged face-to-face at a juncture; first and second flanges configured for restricting the winding area of the optical fiber by being disposed to sandwich the barrels and being dimensioned to radially protrude from the barrels; and ultrasonic fusion splicing points formed along the juncture so as to fusion splice the first and second flanges
15 together.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above features and other advantages of the present invention will be more clearly understood from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which the same or similar elements are denoted by the
20 same reference numerals:

Fig. 1 is a cross-sectional view of a conventional spool for winding an optical

fiber;

Fig. 2 is a sectional view taken along the line I-I' of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a longitudinal-sectional view of another conventional spool for winding an optical fiber;

5 Fig. 4 is a perspective view of a spool for winding an optical fiber in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention in a state when an ultrasonic fusion splicer is in operation;

Fig. 5 is an enlarged perspective view of a portion "A" of Fig. 4;

10 Fig. 6 is a front view of the spool for winding the optical fiber in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention in the state when an ultrasonic fusion splicer is in operation;

Fig. 7 is an enlarged front view of a portion "B" of Fig. 6; and

Fig. 8 is a cross-sectional view of the spool for winding the optical fiber in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will be described in detail with reference to the annexed drawings.

As shown in Figs. 4 to 8, a spool assembly 100 for winding an optical fiber 1000 comprises first and second flanges 200, 300, and first and second cylindrical barrels 201, 301, on which the optical fiber 1000 is wound. A junction is formed by mutually engaging the first and second cylindrical barrels 201, 301 in an axial direction face-to-face and fusing the barrels together. The first and second flanges 200, 300 are formed in the shape of concentric disks that sandwich and protrude radially from the first and second cylindrical barrels 201, 301 to restrict the winding area of the optical fiber 1000. The first and second flanges 200, 300 include subsidiary barrels 203, 303 and are sandwiched by and formed integrally with the subsidiary barrels 203, 303 to assist in the proper winding of the optical fiber 1000 onto the spool assembly 100. A start end of the optical fiber 1000 is drawn into and out of the first and second flanges 200, 300 by means of through holes 202, 302 in the first and second flanges 200, 300. The first and second flanges 200, 300 further include guide ribs 204, 304 that extend radially inward from the through holes 202, 302 to the subsidiary barrels 203, 303, to guide the optical fiber 1000 to the first and second barrels 201, 301 and the subsidiary barrels 203, 303, when the optical fiber 1000 is drawn into and out of the first and second flanges 200, 300. The guide ribs 204, 304 are arc-shaped so as to prevent the optical fiber 1000 from bending during the drawing of the optical fiber 1000 into and out of the first and second flanges 200, 300. The first and second flanges 200, 300 have external wings 205, 305 that extend perpendicularly outward from a concentric

circle of the cylindrical barrels 201, 301. Also included in the first and second flanges 200, 300 are reinforcing ribs 206, 306 which are formed radially on outer surfaces of the external wings 205, 305 to reinforce the external wings 205, 305. A cylindrical hub 600 is formed through the first and second flanges 200, 300 along a central axis of the flanges 200, 300. The first and second flanges 200, 300 are made of plastic with excellent abrasion resistance, corrosion resistance, and electrical insulation properties, such as any of the synthetic resins polyamide, polyacetal, ABS, etc.

In forming the junction between the barrels 201, 301, the barrels are brought and a head 501 of an ultrasonic fusion splicer 500 is located on one side of first and second cylindrical barrels. An ultrasonic wave is then transmitted from the head 501 to form ultrasonic fusion splicing points 400 so as to fusion splice the first and second flanges 200 and 300 together by oscillation of the ultrasonic wave. As can be seen in Figs. 4, 6 and 7, the junction formed has a zigzag pattern or is otherwise uneven along ends of the first and second cylindrical barrels 201, 301.

In a exemplary method of using the spool assembly 100, a start end of the optical fiber 1000 is drawn through the through hole 202 and then the through hole 302. The optical fiber 1000 is wound around subsidiary barrel 303, second cylindrical barrels 301 and first cylindrical barrel 201, Unwinding proceeds from subsidiary barrel 303, second cylindrical barrel 301, first cylindrical barrel 201. Alternatively, either one or both of the winding and unwinding operations can occur in the opposite direction.

As described above, since the first and second flanges 200, 300 of the spool assembly 100 are attached to each other using the ultrasonic fusion splicer 500, the

assembly process of the spool is simplified, quality of the spool assembly is improved and the winding capacity of the optical fiber on the spool is increased.

Although only a few embodiments of the present invention have been described in detail, those skilled in the art will appreciate that various modifications, additions,
5 and substitutions to the specific elements are possible, without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention as disclosed in the accompanying claims.

An ultrasonic fusion splicer is located on one side of first and second cylindrical barrels, thereby improving an ultrasonic fusion splicing points of first and second cylindrical barrels.